

# **SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY CHILDREN'S NETWORK**

## **Policy Council Minutes June 25, 2003**

### **Members/Representatives Present:**

- Susan Melanson, Children's Network
- Claudia Spencer, Department of Public Health
- Roberta York, Preschool Services Department
- Bonnie O'Connor, Children's Fund
- Julian Weaver, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools
- Mary Lynn Clark, Inland Regional Center
- Eric Frykman, M.D. – Department of Public Health
- Rudy Lopez, Department of Behavioral Health
- Patricia Nichols, Community Services Department
- Carol Anselmi, HSS Administration
- Cathy Cimbalo, Director of Department of Children's Services
- Karen Bell, DA – Juvenile Division
- Andrew Gruchy, Department of Behavioral Health
- Gerald Farber, Public Defender
- Mel Rinewalt, Probation
- Ray Wingerd, Probation
- Clark Morrow, Sheriff
- Gerald Greene, MD – Arrowhead Regional Medical Center
- VaNessa Vollmer, Department of Behavioral Health
- Ed Rowe, Children's Network
- Jeronimo Breen, Department of Behavioral Health
- Kelly Cross, HSS – Legislation, Research Unit
- Sandra Baxter, County Counsel
- Mandi Batalo, SB County Library
- Chimezie Ikeanyi, Unique Family Home
- Christopher Ikeanyi, Unique Family Home
- Jim Felten, Department of Public Health
- Don Larkin, First 5 San Bernardino
- Bonnie Konowitch, Children's Network
- Kent Paxton, Children's Network Officer
- Tammy Williams, Children's Network

The meeting of the Children's Network Policy Council was called to order at 12:10 p.m. and convened by Carol Anselmi in the Citrus Room, fifth floor, County Government Center.

## **1.0 Welcome and Introductions**

Carol Anselmi welcomed those present and self-introductions were made.

## **2.0 Approval of Agenda**

A motion was made to approve the agenda as read.

## **3.0 Approval of May Minutes**

The May 28, 2003 minutes were approved as submitted.

## **4.0 Discussion/Action Items**

### **4.1 Group Home Needs Assessment: Discussion/Action Requested to forward the 2003 Group Home Needs Assessment to the Board of Supervisors**

Brian Pickering spoke on behalf of Kathy Watkins. Brian referred everyone to the handout, **Group Home Placement Needs Assessment Executive Summary June 2003, which shows graphs.** Brian gave the following background: The Group Home Needs Assessment has been conducted for the last three years. A survey has been mailed out to all group home providers throughout the county as well as placement workers from the Department of Children's Services, Probation, and Department of Behavioral Health. Initially they did not get a good response rate, but eventually got a 75% response rate through follow-up telephone calls and e-mails. They contacted the University of California, Berkley to gather the data on what other counties are placing in the group homes located in San Bernardino County. The individual stats and data can be shared. If interested in more detailed data, please contact Brian at (909) 388-0168. Some overall data for the county was highlighted: in 2002 there were 95 group homes with 949 beds, in 2003 there are 101 group homes with 994 beds. In 2002 the number of children placed in group homes went down from 995 to 784. The data gathered so far, show that about 50% of the group home placements are not from our county. There was some discussion about how many placements Riverside County places in our County and how many children we place in their county. There was also discussion about Riverside County and San Bernardino County noted as the Inland Empire, so maybe placements in Riverside County should not be noted as out-of-county placements? Some reasons given for out-of-county placements were for difficult placements such as: conduct disorders, chronic runaways, fire-setters, sexually acting out children, multiple failed placements, individual education plans, and sexual predators.

It was noted that some DCS (Department of Children's Services) placement staff felt at times some other counties had more appropriate placements. It appears more placement staff is placing in FFA (Foster Family Agency) due to the lack of appropriate foster and group homes. Approximately 50% of the DCS placement staff responded that the group homes in this county provided quality treatment for the children on their caseloads. The reaction from the group home providers in working with County placement staff was; 74% positive, 9% negative, and 12% had mixed responses. It was noted that there was some very positive comments from the group homes regarding working with DCS Administration. The group home providers mentioned that it would be helpful to have the following information for children placed in their care; current medication, court orders, behavioral and education history.

It was mentioned that Kelly Cross and Kathy Watkins would be presenting the Group Home Needs Assessments tools and data at a National Welfare and Research conference in San Diego in July.

Questions and comments: Gerald Farber asked, how were the 2003 stats compiled? Kelly mentioned that the stats are compiled at a point in time. Another statement made by Andrew Grouchy was some placements through DBH (Department of Behavioral Health) were considered more difficult due to the Childs' need for an IEP (Individual Education Plan). Julian Weaver mentioned that the FYS (Foster Youth Services) through the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools addresses the education and health passports of children placed in-group homes. Julian mentioned that a grant was written 4 years ago to CDE (California Department of Education) to make a more positive impact for children in-group homes. **A suggestion made was for Brian Pickering and Kelly Cross to contact Julian Weaver to change or modify questions pertaining to the health and education passport on the Group Home Needs Assessment for 2004.** Cathy Cimbalo would like the data/graphs for next year to reflect placements in Riverside County due to lack of appropriate treatment in San Bernardino County. Cathy suggested possibly this type of data could be analyzed differently. Kent mentioned that he receives a monthly printout from HSS (Human Services System) Auditing. That report had shown 2,200 children were placed in FFAs and group homes at an approximate cost of five million dollars. Kent mentioned that a main goal of the Family Preservation Councils throughout the county chaired by Ed Rowe of Children's Network is to meet with other agencies to find alternative resources when possible, avoiding some costly placements. Kent mentioned if anyone wanted the entire packet to contact Brian Pickering at (909) 388-0168 or on County e-mail. **Action: It was decided the major stakeholders need to review the report, so a motion was made to bring it back for the July meeting.**

**There was no opposition to the Group Homes Needs Assessment tool being presented and shared at a national conference by Kathy Watkins and Kelly Cross.**

**4.2 Group Home Letter of Support Recommendation: Action requested to recommend a letter of support to SDSS Foster Care Rates Bureau for the Unique Family Home**

Kent Paxton gave the following background on the process of getting a Letter of Support approved for local group homes in San Bernardino County. A policy was approved by the Board of Supervisors in March, 2000 with input from the Chief of Probation, Ray Wingerd, Cathy Cimbalo, Director, Department of Children's Services, , and Rudy Lopez, Director, Department of Behavioral Health. When a local group home provider wants support in the form of a recommendation to the State, they contact the IPC (Inter Placement Committee). The IPC is composed of agencies that place children in our county. The IPC gets all the approval letters from the group home provider and submits a complete package to Kent to go on the agenda for approval by Policy Council members. Once the Policy Council members approved the recommendation, an agenda item is prepared for the Board of Supervisors approval by the Children's Network office. Kent Paxton is the presenter at the Board of Supervisors meeting and also contacts the group home administrator to attend the appropriate Board of Supervisors' meeting.

Twenty-five years ago there was a triage system in place for placement of children in high-level group homes. There is an Institutions Coordinator through the Department of Children's Services who gathers all the needed documentation and presents it to Kent Paxton for Policy Council. The CSOC (Children's System of Care) team has provided technical assistance for the process and was involved in many of the necessary steps to gather the recommendation letters from the community. As of December, 2002 the CSOC team was no longer available, which appeared to cause some problems with the current system. Due to the current problems and questions, Kent has set up a meeting with the key team members of the IPC to work out a coherent procedure for all involved. Kent had County Counsel review the current policy that was approved in 2000, and they agreed it was fine as far as legal content. Another area needing work was to develop procedures on how to handle letters of denial for group home recommendations. Kent mentioned that the Board of Supervisors has the ultimate authority of approving or denying recommendations.

Kent introduced Mr. Ikeanyi of the Unique Family Home. Kent referred everyone to his or her packets with Letter of Support Recommendation items. The Unique Family Home is already licensed through the State for placements from the Inland Regional Center. They have a different rate structure working with the Inland Regional Center. Kent referred everyone to the summary sheet in his or her packets.

The Unique Family Home has a bed capacity of 6 to target boys between the ages of 9 through 17 with mild to moderate emotional/behavioral problems related to child abuse and neglect. The 2002 Group Home Placement Needs Assessment documents the need for this type of treatment facility in our county. The Unique Family Home proposed RCL (Rate Classification Level) is RCL 11/\$5,234 per child per month. Kent mentioned that sometimes the community is confused and sometimes not wanting to give letters of support to local group homes. It was mentioned that they really should state whether it would cause them additional services from their staff. There was further discussion about the educational impact in the group homes and the LCI (Licensed Children Institute). Julian Weaver mentioned there is a different pot of money for the LCI in licensed group homes. Julian suggested a meeting with Sherman Garnett, and himself to draft some bullet points to cover the education piece. **Action: After the above discussion, a motion was made to forward the recommendation for a letter of support to the Board of Supervisors for adoption.**

## 5.0 Information Items

### 5.1 Children's Fund Report

Bonnie O'Connor reported the golf tournament on June 9<sup>th</sup> was very successful. They were able to raise \$280,000, which was the largest amount so far from the golf tournament. Fund raising is particularly difficult at this time due to economy, but they are hopeful they will continue to have successful fund raising. They are presently working on the Christmas Campaign by meeting with liaisons all over the county. They are working on putting together adopt a child campaign for Christmas. In July they will begin working on their Strategic Planning. Bonnie mentioned they have some excess cash in reserve that must be spent by July 22<sup>nd</sup>. If you have any suggestions please contact her, as she is compiling a list of requests to present to the Children's Fund Board. Bonnie agreed to bring stats to the July Policy Council Meeting.

## **5.2 Agency Updates**

Julian Weaver of San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools reported: as of July 1<sup>st</sup> he will be accepting direct responsibility for the Foster Youth Services.

Susan Melanson of Children's Network reported: The Children's Network Annual Conference is September 18<sup>th</sup> at the Ontario Convention Center. Most of you have received an e-mail with more details.

The registration forms are at the printer now and a large quantity will be mailed out very soon. Susan asked the members present to spread the word to their staff. You can register on-line at the Children's Network website [www.co.san-bernardino.ca.us/childnet](http://www.co.san-bernardino.ca.us/childnet). Scholarships will be available for parents and youth, contact Susan or Jennifer Celise-Reyes at (909) 387-8966. The keynote speaker and date for 2004 is: September 30, 2004, Dr. Ira Chasnoff a national expert on Perinatal Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

Cathy Cimbalo of the Department of Children's Services reported: The Child Welfare System will be going through a new redesign process. The plan will be a 10-year roll out process. Through the Children's Network conference there will be an overview of the new Child Welfare System. The new redesign will have components of: family preservation; formation of community teams; implementation of 636 the State's process of quality assurance review of child welfare based on federal regs.; and community task forces will begin meeting in January 2004. Cathy mentioned that some of members would be contacted to participate in the process and asked to send their young, energetic staff that does not plan to retire in the next 10 years.

Kent Paxton of Children's Network reported: This year has turned out to be a year of Strategic Planning. He has been involved with the Strategic Planning process for the Department of Behavioral Health and First 5. He and some other core team members attended a workshop with Dr. Ira Chasnoff as the key speaker. Dr. Ira Chasnoff is a national known expert on the effects of Perinatal alcohol and drug abuse. Through a previous survey conducted at Juvenile Hall, it was noted that 95% of the juveniles in Juvenile Hall had been exposed to alcohol and/or drugs. Kent will continue to bring updates on this new Perinatal Plan.

Patricia Nickols of Community Services Department reported: On July 14<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. at the Board of Supervisors Chambers a comprehensive report will be presented on the homeless population and you are all welcome to attend.

Through a private contract with Lens Crafters, Headstart, and Children's Fund, they will be having a mobile van with doctors to do exams and fit children for glasses. The mobile van will go into different areas of the county such as children at the Obershaw and Education First program and in the high desert. The goal is to serve 150 children. Patricia mentioned the van could go to different areas as long as it can be located in a secure location. Also, as of July 1, 2003 the County Board of Supervisors will no longer govern Community Services. They will become a non-profit with emphasis on fund raising, etc. Kent mentioned she would still be welcomed to attend the Policy Council Meetings.

Don Larkin of First 5 reported: First 5 has been going through a Strategic Planning Process. Through community and technical teams countywide extensive data was collected on educational, community impact and performance review. The teams over the next 2 months will meet 6 to 8 times to draft their recommendations to go before the Commission of First 5.

Rudy Lopez of the Department of Behavioral Health reported: The Strategic Planning process for Children's Services through DBH was very successful thanks to Kent Paxton, Paula Roby and Andrew Gruchy. It is anticipated it may take some time for implementation and you can go to their website for further details.

Andrew Gruchy of the Department of Behavioral Health reported: Andrew mentioned due to budget cuts for the CSOC, he has been meeting with Bonnie Konowitch of Children's Network. They have been working on a \$1 million a year grant for 6 years from the Federal Government's Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, Child Mental Health Initiative. The application is due in October, and will need to go before the Board of Supervisors by September 1<sup>st</sup>. The project will involve system and services integration, interagency collaboration, wraparound services, family involvement, cultural competence, and evaluation. Kent mentioned this process will also involved a letter signed by the Governor of California or his Mental Health Designee since it is a performance contract for the CSOC. .

## **6.0 Other**

Will bring back the Group Home Needs Assessment for the July meeting.

## **7.0 Public Comment**

No comment. Meeting adjourned.

Children's Network Policy Council  
June 25, 2003

**8.0 Next Meeting will be: September 24, 2003.**

*Will go dark in August*

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Tammy Williams**  
**Children's Network**  
**Policy Council Recording Secretary**  
/tgw